

SECURED PRINTING SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an information
processing apparatus capable of remotely instructing
printing by issuing a print job to a printing device
connected via a predetermined network, the printing
device, a printing system having the information
10 processing apparatus and the printing device, a
control method for the information processing
apparatus, a control method for the printing device,
a printing method for the printing system, programs
for executing the printing method, and storage media.

15 Related Background Art

 In recent years, in a system in which an
information processing terminal such as a computer
and a printing device are connected via a network,
the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP) has been
20 developed and attracting attention as a technique for
causing the printing device to execute printing
according to an instruction from the information
processing terminal.

 This specifies a communication procedure
25 (protocol) for performing printing in a network
printing device located in a remote place and
organized by Printer Working Group (PWG) which is an

international standardization organization related to
printing. An initial version specification thereof
is widely opened to the public as RFC2566 which is
one of Internet standards according to the Internet
5 Engineering Task Force (IETF).

In the IPP, a plurality of attributes for
closely controlling various printer operations and
job operations for printing and print jobs are
specified.

10 For the printer operations, "Print-Job
(printing execution)", "Get-Printer-Attributes
(printer attributes acquisition)", "Get-Jobs (job
list acquisition)", and the like are specified. In
addition, for the job operations, "Cancel-Job
15 (cancellation of job)", "Get-Job-Attributes (job
state acquisition)", "Hold-Job (suspension of job)",
"Release-Job (resumption of job)", and the like are
specified. In this way, several kinds of processing
for controlling start to end of printing are
20 specified.

In addition, in order to designate a detailed
setting for a printing device and to designate a
detailed output form of a print, various attributes
such as the number of copies, a finishing form, a
25 print medium, and quality are specified.

Then, a user can designate an IPP operation
after designating these IPP attributes in advance.

Note that the IPP is specified as a protocol for an application layer in a network architecture. It is specified that "HTTP V1.1" is used as a transport protocol.

5 Incidentally, as it has become easier for a user to perform control of a printing device and control from generation to completion of a job through a network, requirement has been increased for dealing with matters such as management of access to
10 the printing device or control of access to a job by the user, and security on the network.

The IPP adopts an encryption communication system according to Transport Layer Security (TLS) as a method for guaranteeing security on the network.

15 The TLS logically constructs a secure channel, which utilizes an encryption technique, on a network connecting a client device (e.g., user PC) and a printing device. In addition, the TLS also has a mechanism for guaranteeing reliability of a client
20 and a printing device utilizing a hierarchical digital certificate according to Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).

More secured remote printing can be realized by utilizing a client and a printing device in which the
25 respective techniques of the IPP and the TLS are applied and implemented.

A general conventional example of the secured

printing will be hereinafter described.

A user executes remote printing according to the IPP from his/her own personal computer (PC) or the like in advance. This can be performed according
5 to the "Print-Job" operation and the like specified in the IPP.

A printing device is provided with an IPP server function and can accept the "Print-Job" operation. Then, after accepting the "Print-Job"
10 operation, the printing device generates a print job.

With the IPP, a job URI is issued for each operation request in order to specify the generated print job and informs the user of the job URI as an IPP response. The printing device returns this job
15 URI to the user who issued the operation. The user can designate the job URI in order to execute an operation (acquisition, cancellation, or the like of a job status) with respect to the job later.

In the case of the remote secured printing,
20 printing is not processed immediately after a print operation is issued. A job is held in a state in which it is accumulated in a data spool area of the printing device. This is for preventing a print from being outputted before the user reaches the place
25 where the printing device is located.

In addition, the IPP specifies predetermined attributes for realizing such processing. Moreover,

since print data and IPP operations flowing on the network all go through a secured logical channel according to the TLS, there is no fear of leakage or the like of user information and print data.

5 Now, the print job held in the printing device is released as described below. That is, the user who issued the job URI goes to the front of the printing device and inputs a password on an operation panel of the printing device. The password is
10 usually registered in the printing device as information peculiar to the user.

 Upon succeeding in user authentication with the password, the user acquires his/her own job list from the operation panel. The "Get-Jobs" operation of the
15 IPP is performed for the acquisition of the job list. Then, the user designates the job URI in the hold state, which was generated earlier, and designates release (resumption) of the job.

 For this processing, the "Release-Job"
20 operation of the IPP is performed. The user can complete the print processing by performing a series of operations including the authentication, the job list acquisition, and the release of the job on the operation panel of the printing device.

25 Now, as described in the above-mentioned conventional example, in order to perform the secured printing, the user has to process, on the operation

panel of the printing device, the three steps
consisting of the user authentication, the
acquisition of the job list issued by himself/herself,
and the release (resumption) of the job on hold
5 through designation of the job URI.

That is, as the operations of the IPP, after
the authentication, the user issues the "Get-Jobs
(job list acquisition)" operation in order to acquire
his/her own job URI list, and designates the
10 "Release-Job (resumption of suspended job)" operation
with respect to the predetermined job URI on hold.

In this way, the user has to execute each of
the above-mentioned three steps in order to realize
the secured printing, and complexity in the
15 operations cannot be avoided.

Moreover, usually, the operation panel of the
printing device is only provided with an extremely
small or minimum necessary operation area for the
purpose of reducing cost.

20 Therefore, there is a problem in that, if the
user has to process many operations on the operation
panel on the printing device, the user's feeling of
use of the printing device is extremely deteriorated.

25 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to
provide a printing system in which the above-

mentioned problems are solved.

In addition, it is another object of the present invention to provide an information processing apparatus which can simplify operations on
5 a printing device side by writing job designation information in a detachable storage medium.

Further, it is yet another object of the present invention to provide a printing device which performs user authentication using a detachable
10 storage medium and controls permission to use the printing device.

The above-mentioned objects and other objects of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description based upon drawings.
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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing an example of a structure of a secured printing system according to the embodiment of the present invention, to which an
20 information processing apparatus, an authentication server, and a printing device are applicable;

Fig. 2 is a diagram illustrating a series of sequence of processing from a "Print-Job" operation after user authentication to writing of a job URI in
25 an IC card;

Fig. 3 is a diagram illustrating a series of sequence of processing until printing is resumed

after a user finishes authentication in a printing device;

Fig. 4 is a flow chart showing an example of a series of processing procedures relating to print
5 processing of a printing system to which an information processing apparatus and a printing device according to the present invention are applicable;

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating a
10 memory map of a storage medium storing various data processing programs which can be read by a printing system to which the information processing apparatus and the printing device according to the present invention are applicable; and

15 Fig. 6 is a flow chart showing an example of a series of processing procedures relating to a plurality of print processing of the printing system to which the information processing apparatus and the printing device according to the present invention
20 are applicable.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The embodiments of a secured printing system according to the present invention will be described
25 with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing an example of a structure of a secured printing system according to

the embodiment of the present invention, to which an information processing apparatus, an authentication server, and a printing device are applicable.

In Fig. 1, reference numeral 1-1 denotes an
5 operation terminal on a user side with which a user using this system performs print processing. More specifically, a personal computer, a workstation, or the like corresponds to the operation terminal on the user side (hereinafter referred to as user PC).

10 Reference numeral 1-2 denotes a printing device which accepts a print request from a user and actually executes print processing. A so-called network printer, a digital multifunction device which combines a scanner and a printer to realize a copier
15 function through digital image processing, or the like corresponds to the printing device.

A storage device (spooling area) 1-3 for receiving data for printing from the user PC 1-1 and temporarily holding and storing the data, is attached
20 to the printing device 1-2. The printing device 1-2 and the storage device 1-3 are connected by a dedicated cable or an internal bus.

Moreover, the printing device 1-2 is logically connected to a network 1-13 such as the Internet or
25 an Intranet. A network controller (not shown) for accepting print processing through the network 1-13 and an operation panel (not shown) for controlling

the printing device when a user directly uses the printing device, are attached to the printing device 1-2.

Reference numeral 1-4 denotes an authentication server, which is a known authentication server for holding and managing authentication information of a user and key information necessary for encryption communication and uniquely authenticating the user who has been registered in advance. The authentication server 1-4 may also have a function as a domain controller. In this case, the authentication server 1-4 plays a central role of constituting a logical group (domain) of users on the network 1-13, controls a right of the registered users to access resources in the domain, or managing security information of each user to provide a secure communication environment in the domain.

Moreover, the authentication server 1-4 may be constituted as a directory server and also have a function of holding and managing access right information of a user to network resources or the like such as authentication information of the user and controlling the information.

Note that, in the case in which the printing device 1-2 directly holds and manages information relating to user authentication, the authentication server 1-4 is unnecessary, and the secured printing

system according to the present embodiment may be constituted only by the user PC 1-1 and the printing device 1-2.

In addition, the user PC 1-1, the printing
5 device 1-2, and the authentication server 1-4 are logically connected by the network 1-13 and are constituted such that information can be sent and received remotely among them.

Note that a physical structure of the network
10 1-13 may be a wired structure or a wireless structure. In addition, it is needless to mention that a plurality of known protocols are used as a communication protocol of the network 1-13.

Reference numeral 1-5 denotes an IC card (smart
15 card) which holds authentication information peculiar to a user and is used for user authentication when the user uses a printing device. Usually, information is held in or read out from the IC card 1-5 by a dedicated IC card reader/writer. In
20 addition, authentication information, key information, and the like peculiar to a user are held in the IC card 1-5. Thus, an advanced encryption processing apparatus for preventing forgery of a card, illegal reading of data, falsification of data, and the like
25 is incorporated in the IC card 1-5.

The user carries the IC card 1-5 with himself/herself and, in using the user PC 1-1 or the

printing device 1-2, the user performs user authentication using the IC card 1-5. If the authentication is successful, the user can use the user PC 1-1 or the printing device 1-2. That is, the authentication information peculiar to the user (digital certificate or encryption key) is stored in the IC card 1-5, and authentication information (encryption key) corresponding to the authentication information (encryption key) peculiar to the user is held in the authentication server 1-4.

When the user presents the IC card 1-5 to an apparatus for reading information in the IC card 1-5 (IC card reader/writer described later) or inserts the IC card 1-5 in the apparatus, the apparatus and the authentication server 1-4 communicate with each other through the network 1-13. Then, the authentication information in the IC card 1-5 and the authentication information held in the authentication server 1-4 are calculated according to a predetermined encryption algorithm and, when both pieces of authentication information coincide with each other, the user is regarded as having succeeded in the authentication.

In a process of this authentication processing, the user also needs to input a pass phrase which only the user knows. In using the user PC 1-1 or the printing device 1-2, the user cannot use the device

unless the user succeeds in authentication through the above-mentioned process of authentication processing in any case.

Next, internal structures of the user PC 1-1
5 and the printing device 1-2 will be described.

First, a characteristic internal structure of the user PC 1-1 will be described.

Reference numeral 1-6 denotes an IC card reader/writer, which has functions of accessing the
10 IC card 1-5 carried by a user and reading information held in the IC card 1-5 or writing information in the IC card 1-5.

Reference numeral 1-7 denotes an IC card reader/writer driver on a client side (hereinafter
15 referred to as IC card driver) for controlling the IC card reader/writer 1-6. The IC card driver 1-7 controls the IC card reader/writer 1-6, accesses the IC card 1-5 carried by the user, accesses the authentication server 1-4 based upon the information
20 held in the IC card 1-5 to perform user authentication, and writes information specifying and designating a peculiar job issued by the user (job URI) in a storage area of the IC card 1-5 as described later.

25 In addition, reference numeral 1-8 denotes an IPP client component (hereinafter referred to as IPP client) for providing a remote print function

according to the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP) in the user PC 1-1.

The IC card reader/writer 1-6, the IC card reader/writer driver 1-7, and the IPP client component 1-8 are connected with each other in terms of hardware or software inside of the user PC 1-1 and provide predetermined functions to the user by performing logical data processing.

That is, in the case in which the user wishes to execute printing through a network, the IPP client component 1-8 provides the user with a print operation according to the IPP. More specifically, the IPP client component 1-8 performs processing for issuing a "Print-Job" operation request to an IPP device on the network 1-13 and receiving a response to the operation request. The "Print-Job" operation of the IPP is an operation for generating a print job for a remote IPP device. The IPP client component 1-8 receives job identification information uniquely identifying a print job generated in the IPP device, that is, a job Uniform Resource Identifier (URI; [RFC2396]) as a response. With the IPP, when the "print-Job" operation is issued, the issued print job can be brought into a suspended (hold) state.

In addition, the user is also capable of issuing a plurality of "Print-Job" operations. Job identification information (URI) is issued from the

IPP device for each of the plurality of "Print-Job" operations and returned to the IPP client. All of the issued print jobs are held in the IPP server in the same manner as in the case in which a single
5 print job is issued.

The IPP client component 1-8 of the secured printing system according to the present embodiment is constituted such that a print job is automatically issued in the hold state even if the user does not
10 expressly designates this. According to this function, a print is prevented from being outputted before the user goes to the printing device 1-2 to pick the print up, and information of the print is prevented from being leaked.

15 In addition, other than the above, the IPP operation includes functions of a "Get-Printer-Attributes" operation for acquiring a state of the remote IPP device, a "Print-URI" operation for designating content information to be printed and
20 performing printing with reference to this designated information from the Internet, and the like. The user can execute these operations appropriately as required.

Moreover, the IC card reader/writer driver 1-7
25 on the client side controls the IC card reader/writer 1-6 physically connected to the user PC 1-1 to perform operation of information. Then, in the case

in which the user authenticated by the authentication server 1-4 executes the "Print-Job" with the IPP client component 1-8, the IC card reader/writer driver 1-7 receives job URI information acquired from the IPP device from the IPP client component 1-8 as a response to the execution and further writes the job URI information in the IC card 1-5.

In the case in which a plurality of "Print-Jobs" are executed, there are a plurality of pieces of job URI information issued from the IPP server and acquired. The plurality of pieces of job URI information issued by the same user are written in the IC card 1-5 of the user.

Job-URI information written in the IC card 1-5 is usually deleted after a print job for the Job-URI is finished. However, it is also possible for the user to perform setting such that Job-URI information for a print job for use in reprinting is not deleted after printing is finished. In this case, if a plurality of Job-URIs are stored in an IC card, it is possible to perform setting such that Job-URI information for the respective Job-URI is deleted after printing is finished or to perform setting such that the Job-URI information is not deleted. Consequently, convenience for the user at the time of secured printing is further improved.

Note that as a predetermined storage area of

the IC card 1-5 in which job URI information is written, a capacity for allowing a user to write a plurality of pieces of job URI information is secured in advance. Since cost of a card changes depending upon a capacity of the storage area of the IC card 1-5, usually, several options are prepared for the IC card 1-5 according to a storage capacity, and a user can select the IC card 1-5 with a desired capacity.

Note that in the user PC 1-1, a CPU, a ROM, a RAM, a hard disk, a network interface, and the like are provided, though not illustrated in the figure.

In addition, the IC card driver 1-7 and the IPP client 1-8 may be realized in terms of software or hardware by executing a program stored in the hard disk or the like with the CPU of the user PC 1-1.

Next, a characteristic internal structure on the printing device 1-2 side will be described.

Reference numeral 1-9 is an IC card reader/writer attached to the printing device 1-2. The IC card reader/writer 1-9 basically has functions equivalent to those of the IC card reader/writer 1-6 attached to the user PC 1-1, that is, functions of accessing the IC card 1-5 carried by a user, reading information held in the IC card 1-5, and writing information in the IC card 1-5.

In addition, the IC card reader/writer 1-9 is controlled by an IC card driver 1-10 on the server

side. The IC card driver 1-10 controls the IC card reader/writer 1-9 to read authentication information peculiar to a user from the IC card 1-5 of the user and accesses the authentication server 1-4 to perform
5 user authentication. These are equivalent to the functions of the IC card driver 1-7 provided in the user PC 1-1.

However, the IC card driver 1-10 is further provided with functions of, in the case in which a
10 job URI is held in the IC card 1-5 of the user, reading out the job URI and designating the job URI to execute the "Release-Job" operation of the IPP. Note that details of the processing sequence will be described later.

15 Reference numeral 1-11 denotes an IPP server component (hereinafter referred to as IPP server), which provides a function for the printing device 1-2 to accept and process an IPP operation as the IPP device. This IPP server 1-11 accepts a "Print-Job"
20 operation issued by a user and generates a job and, at the same time, temporarily holds this job in the storage device 1-3, generates a job URI for the job, and returns the job URI to the user PC side.

Reference numeral 1-12 denotes a printer engine,
25 which provides a print function itself in the printing device 1-2.

Note that in the printing device 1-2, a CPU, a

ROM, a RAM, a hard disk, a network interface, and the like are provided, though not illustrated in the figure.

In addition, the IC card driver 1-10 and the
5 IPP server 1-11 may be realized in terms of software or hardware by executing a program stored in the ROM, the hard disk, or the like with the CPU of the user printing device 1-2.

In this way, the present embodiment relates to
10 a printing device such as a digital multifunction device or a printer having a user authentication function using the IC card 1-5, and more specifically to a mechanism for realizing secured printing in these devices. In addition, the present embodiment
15 also relates to a printing device adapted to the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP), which is an IETF standard, for device control for printing, print job control, or event notification.

A sequent of a series of processing from the
20 "Print-Job" operation after user authentication to writing in an IC card of a job URI will be hereinafter described with reference to Fig. 2.

Fig. 2 is a diagram illustrating a series of
sequence of processing from the "Print-Job" operation
25 after user authentication to writing in an IC card of a job URI. In Fig. 2, components identical with those in Fig. 1 are denoted by the same reference

numerals. Note that a series of sequence of processing from S2-1 to S2-5 is processing executed by respective units in the figure.

First, a user issues a print operation, that is,
5 "Print-Job" (S2-1). This processing is executed with respect to the IPP server 1-11 from the IPP client 1-8. As a result, the IPP server 1-11 returns "Job-URI" to the IPP client 1-8 (S2-2).

Then, the IPP client 1-8 communicates the
10 result (Job-URI) to the IC card driver 1-7 (S2-3).

Moreover, the IC card driver 1-7 issues an instruction to write acquired job URI information in the IC card 1-5 (Write "Job-URI") to the IC card reader/writer 1-6 (S2-4).

15 In response to this, the IC card reader/writer 1-6 executes writing of the job URI in a predetermined storage area of the IC card 1-5 (S2-5).

As described above, a print request ("Print-Job") according to the IPP executed by the user is
20 adapted such that print output is not immediately performed when a job is generated and print data is accepted on the IPP device side. This is for preventing secrecy of print contents from being leaked to an unintended third party because a print
25 is outputted before a user receiving the print reaches the remote IPP device.

In order to realize such a function, in

executing the IPP print operation ("Print-Job", etc.), the IPP client 1-8 of the user PC 1-1 designates a "job-hold-until" attribute of the IPP.

The "job-hold-until" attribute provides a
5 function of first bringing a generated print job into a hold state and releasing the job in the hold state according to a value designated in the attribute.

Presently, the following values are specified as values which the "job-hold-until" attribute can
10 take; "no-hold," "indefinite," "day-time," "evening," "night," "weekend," "second-shift," and "third-shift." Note that, since details are described in the IPP standard specifications, descriptions on these values will be omitted here.

15 Note that, according to the IPP standard specifications, a user may designate any of the above-mentioned values as the "job-hold-until" attribute in executing a print operation. However, the secured printing system according to the present
20 embodiment is constituted such that only a value designated by an administrator in advance becomes valid.

This setting is designated by the administrator in the IPP client 1-8.

25 Basically, setting is performed such that a job maintains a hold state until a "Release-Job" IPP operation described later is designated ("job-hold-

until" = "indefinite").

It is assumed here that the IC card 1-5 is provided with a storage capacity necessary and sufficient for holding a plurality of pieces of job
5 URI information of a user.

Now, the print job issued as described above is sent to the printing device 1-2 through the network 1-13, and the print data is further held in the data storage device 1-3 attached to the printing device 1-
10 2.

As described above, since the job is held in the hold state, it is never printed and outputted immediately. Note that, as described above, the encryption communication according to the TLS is
15 applied to the network 1-13 connecting the user PC 1-1 and the printing device 1-2, and secrecy of print data or the like is maintained.

A series of sequence until a user resumes printing after finishing authentication in the
20 printing device 1-2 will be hereinafter described with reference to Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 is a diagram illustrating a series of sequence until a user resumes printing after finishing authentication in the printing device 1-2.
25 In Fig. 3, components identical with those in Fig. 1 are denoted by the identical reference numerals. Note that a series of sequence from S3-1 to S3-4 is

processing executed by respective units in the figure.

Here, the user inserts the IC card 1-5 which the user himself/herself possesses in the IC card reader/writer 1-9 of the printing device 1-2 and
5 performs necessary authentication procedures such as inputting a pass phrase. Since the procedures for user authentication are as described above, detailed descriptions thereof will be omitted. An operation
10 sequence after the user authentication is successful will be described with reference to Fig. 3.

First, in the case in which job URI information (Job-URI) concerning the job issued by the user is held in the IC card 1-5, the IC card reader/writer 1-9 reads this job URI information (S3-1). This
15 processing is actually performed by the IC card driver 1-10 executing a read operation (Read "Job-URI") with respect to the IC card reader writer 1-9 (S3-2).

That is, when the user inserts the IC card 1-5
20 in the IC card reader/writer 1-9 of the printing device 1-2, the IC card reader/writer 1-9 generates an interrupt signal informing the IC card driver 1-10 that the IC card 1-5 has been inserted. Then, in response to this interrupt signal, the IC card driver
25 1-10 executes user authentication processing. When the user authentication is successful, thereafter, the IC card driver 1-10 starts processing for

continuously reading the job URI information stored in the IC card 1-5.

In this way, in the case in which job URI information (Job-URI) is stored in the IC card 1-5, job URI data (Job-URI) can be acquired through S3-1 and S3-2. On the other hand, in the case in which job URI information is not stored in the IC card 1-5, the sequence fails and the subsequent processing is not executed.

10 In the case in which the IC card driver 1-10 acquires job URI information of the user in this way, the IC card driver 1-10 continuously designates this job URI to automatically issue a "Release-Job" operation of the IPP to the IPP server 1-11 (S3-3).
15 In many cases, the "Release-Job" operation is implemented as an IPP client component. However, in the secured printing system according to the present embodiment, the function of the IC card driver 1-10 is adapted such that this "Release-Job" operation can
20 be issued.

Then, the IPP server 1-11 accepts the "Release-Job" operation, retrieves the designated job URI, and releases the job in the hold state.

"Print Start" is issued to the printer engine
25 1-12 from the IPP server 1-11 (S3-4), the released job is immediately processed as an active print job, and print output is performed.

Note that, in the case in which the printing device 1-2 accepts print jobs from a plurality of users, since job URIs different for each user are allocated to the IPP server 1-11, job URIs never
5 overlap among the users.

In addition, a user holds job URI information necessary for a print job of the user in the IC card 1-5, it is unnecessary to retrieve a job of the user on the operation panel of the printing device 1-2
10 again. This means that processing in which a user issues a "Get-Jobs" operation of the IPP from an operation panel of a printing device in the past is unnecessary any more. Then, since the IC card driver 1-10 automatically issues "Release-Job" with success
15 of user authentication as a trigger, the user does not need to expressly designate this operation. That is, the user can automatically resume a print job of the user and perform print output simply by inserting the IC card 1-5 possessed by himself/herself in the
20 printing device 1-2 and inputting necessary authentication information (pass phrase).

Moreover, in the case in which the print job ends normally, the job URI information held in the IC card 1-5 and the print job and the print data held in
25 the IPP printing device 1-2 are completely deleted. This is for preventing an unauthorized user illegally accessing the IC card 1-5 or the printing device 1-2

to steal print information.

In this way, in the secured printing system according to the present embodiment, a job URI of a user is held in an IC card, and the user does not
5 have to expressly designate a job URI. That is, since a printing device can see in advance which job should be printed, it becomes unnecessary for the user to execute "Get-Jobs" again to acquire the job URI of the user held in the IC card as in the past.

10 Moreover, if the job URI is held in the IC card at the time of user authentication in the printing device, since it is evident that the user resumes executing the print job, it is possible to constitute an IC card driver so as to automatically issue
15 "Release-Job" when the user has succeeded in the authentication. Therefore, it becomes also unnecessary for the user to expressly issue the "Release-Job" operation.

From the above, the printing device according
20 to the present embodiment can automate the two IPP operations of "Get-Jobs" and "Release-Job" completely, and it becomes possible to give the user a feeling as if printing is resumed only through the authentication step.

25 Moreover, according to the secured printing system according to the present embodiment, it becomes possible for a user to perform remote

printing through a secure network in printing a
confidential document. Then, since the confidential
document is not outputted until the user directly
goes to a printing device, confidentiality of the
5 document is kept completely.

In addition, in the case in which the user
wishes to resume a print job on hold with a printing
device to which the print job has been sent, the user
only has to set an IC card that holds user
10 authentication information owned by himself/herself
in the printing device according to the present
embodiment and to execute necessary user
authentication procedures. That is, it becomes
unnecessary for the user to perform the operation of
15 acquiring a job URI of himself/herself from a panel
of the printing device ("Get-Jobs") and designating
resumption of the job on hold ("Release-Job") after
the authentication procedures in the printing device.
Consequently, user operability of the printing device
20 can be remarkably improved in performing secured
printing.

Moreover, since user authentication using an IC
card is performed in both a user PC and a printing
device, injustice such as pretending of an operator
25 or illegal use of the printing system by a user who
picked up an IC card or the like can be prevented.

A series of processing procedures relating to

print processing of the printing system having the information processing apparatus and the printing device in the present embodiment will be hereinafter described with reference to a flow chart of Fig. 4.

5 Fig. 4 is a flow chart showing an example of the series of processing procedures relating to the print processing of this printing system. Note that S401 to S403 and S411 to S417 indicate respective steps.

10 The user inserts the IC card 1-5 in the IC card reader/writer 1-6, causes the IC card reader/writer 1-6 to read authentication information in the IC card 1-5, inputs a pass phrase, and performs authentication processing with the authentication
15 server 1-4 according to the authentication information and the pass phrase (S401) and, if the authentication fails, ends the processing directly.

 On the other hand, in the case in which the user succeeds in authentication by the authentication
20 server 1-4, a print operation, that is, a "Print-Job" operation is issued from the IPP client 1-8 to the IPP server 1-11 in a suspended state according to an instruction of the user from an operation unit (not shown) of the user PC 1-1 (S402). That is, the print
25 operation is issued with "indefinite" designated as a value of the "job-hold-until" attribute. However, since this designation is automatically performed

according to setting of an administrator or the like,
the user does not need to be conscious of the
designation.

When this "Print-Job (suspended state)"
5 operation is received on the print server 1-2 side,
the IPP server 1-11 generates a print job based upon
the "Print-Job" operation and, at the same time, puts
the print job on hold to store and hold it in the
storage device 1-3 (S411). Then, the IPP server 1-11
10 returns "Job-URI" of the print job to the IPP client
1-8 (S412).

Then, the IPP client 1-8 communicates the
result (Job-URI) to the IC card driver 1-7, and the
IC card driver 1-7 writes acquired job URI
15 information in the IC card 1-5 with the IC card
reader/writer 1-6 (S403) and ends the processing.

It is assumed here that the print job specified
by "Job-URI" may be held on a server on the network
(not shown) other than the storage device 1-3. In
20 this case, "Job-URI" becomes information specifying
the server on the network and a position of the print
job in the server.

Next, the user inserts the IC card 1-5 having
stored therein authentication information of the user
25 and job URI information in the card reader/writer 1-6
of the printing device 1-2, causes the card
reader/writer 1-6 to read the authentication

information in the IC card 1-5, inputs a pass phrase,
and performs authentication processing by the
authentication server 1-4 according to the
authentication information and the pass phrase (S413)
5 and, if the authentication fails, ends the processing
directly.

On the other hand, if the user has succeeded in
the authentication by the authentication server 1-4
in step S413, next, the user judges whether or not
10 job URI information (Job-URI) concerning a job issued
by the user is held in the IC card 1-5 (S414) and, if
the job URI information is not held, ends the
processing directly.

In contrast, if the job URI information (Job-
15 URI) concerning the job issued by the user is held in
the IC card 1-5, the IC card driver 1-10 causes the
IC card reader/writer 1-9 to read the job URI
information (S415).

Next, the IC card driver 1-10 designates this
20 job URI and automatically issues a "Release-Job"
operation of the IPP to the IPP server 1-11 (S416).

Then, the IPP server 1-11 accepts the "Release-
Job" operation, retrieves a designated job URI,
releases a job in the hold state, and issues "Print
25 Start" to the printer engine 1-12 from the IPP server
1-11. Then, print output is started by the printer
engine 1-12 (S417).

In this way, when job URI information of an IPP job issued by a user is held in an IC card (smart card) possessed by the user, the IC card (smart card) is inserted in a printing device and, when user authentication is successful, if a job URI is held in the IC card, the IC card designates the job URI and automatically issues "Release-Job".

In addition, a job is issued (in conformity with a "job-hold-until" attribute) according to the Internet printing Protocol (IPP), the job URI is held in a smart card in a device (user PC, etc.) which has issued the job. When the smart card is inserted in a printer and user authentication is successful, the IC card designates a job URI held in advance and automatically issues "Release-Job" to execute printing.

Consequently, a job URI list is not displayed on an operation panel and, when the user succeeds in authentication, "Release-Job" of the IPP operation is immediately issued.

Note that, although the case in which "indefinite" is designated as a value of the "job-hold-until" attribute is described above, the value may be other values such as "day-time," "evening," "night," and "weekend".

Then, it is structured such that a job suspended and held in the printing device 1-2 is

valid until a deadline designated in the above-mentioned "job-hold-until" attribute value and, when the deadline has passed, the job is automatically deleted by the IPP server 1-11.

5 In addition, the deadline designated in the "job-hold-until" attribute value can be set and changed on the user PC by an administrator or the like.

 Note that the present invention is applicable
10 whether a printer engine is a laser beam system, an electrophotographic system (e.g., LED system) other than the laser beam system, a liquid crystal shutter system, an ink-jet system, a thermal transfer system, a sublimation system, or other print system.

15 From the above, with the printing system in which the user PC 1-1 which issues a print job, the printing device 1-2 which receives the print job and executes print processing, and the authentication server 1-4 which manages information for uniquely
20 authenticating a user and performs processing required in authentication processing are connected via the network 1-13, authentication information peculiar to the user is held, and an IC card to be used when the user uses the user PC 1-1 and the
25 printing device 1-2 is provided; the user PC 1-1 designates a job suspension attribute for a print job and issues the print job to the printing device 1-2,

and acquires peculiar job designation information (Job-URI) which is returned as a result of print job issue and acceptance processing of the printing device 1-2 and writes the job designation information in the IC card 1-5 which is used when the user uses the printing device. If the user succeeds in user authentication and peculiar job designation information is held in the IC card 1-5, the printing device 1-2 automatically designates the peculiar job designation information to issue a job release request in the print job issue and acceptance processing. Consequently, user operations at the time of execution of remote printing can be reduced, and usability in the printing device can be improved.

Next, a series of processing procedures in the case in which a user issues a plurality of print jobs will be hereinafter described with reference to a flow chart of Fig. 6.

Fig. 6 is a flow chart showing an example of a series of processing procedures relating to a plurality of print processing of this printing system. Note that S601 to S604 and S611 to S620 indicate respective steps.

The user inserts the IC card 1-5 in the IC card reader/writer 1-6, causes the IC card reader/writer 1-6 to read authentication information in the IC card 1-5, inputs a pass phrase, and performs

authentication processing with the authentication server 1-4 according to the authentication information and the pass phrase (S601) and, if the authentication fails, ends the processing directly.

5 On the other hand, in the case in which the user succeeds in authentication by the authentication server 1-4, a print operation, that is, a "Print-Job" operation is issued from the IPP client 1-8 to the IPP server 1-11 in a suspended state according to an
10 instruction of the user from a operation unit (not shown) of the user PC 1-1 (S602). That is, the print operation is issued with "indefinite" designated as a value of the "job-hold-until" attribute. However, since this designation is automatically performed
15 according to setting of an administrator or the like, the user does not need to be conscious of the designation.

 When this "Print-Job (suspended state)" operation is received on the print server 1-2 side,
20 the IPP server 1-11 generates a print job based upon the "Print-Job" operation and, at the same time, puts the print job on hold to store and hold it in the storage device 1-3 (S611). Then, the IPP server 1-11 returns "Job-URI" of the print job to the IPP client
25 1-8 (S612).

 Then, the IPP client 1-8 communicates the result (Job-URI) to the IC card driver 1-7, and the

IC card driver 1-7 writes acquired job URI information in the IC card 1-5 with the IC card reader/writer 1-6 (S603).

It is possible for the user to designate
5 printing of a plurality of documents and obtain prints later all together. After the user issues a print job and job URI information is written in the CI card 1-5 (S603), it is judged whether the user continuously instructs printing (S604). In the
10 present embodiment, the judgment on whether or not the user continuously instructs printing (S604) is performed according to judgment on whether or not the user has pulled out the IC card 1-5 from the IC card reader/writer 1-6. When the IC card 1-5 is pulled
15 out from the IC card reader/writer 1-6, since a valid session of user authentication ends, print instruction after that cannot be performed. Therefore, the printing system in the present embodiment is capable of judging whether or not
20 printing is continuously instructed according to this operation. When the IC card 1-5 is pulled out from the IC card reader/writer 1-6, the printing system judges that printing is not continuously instructed and ends the processing.

25 On the other hand, while the user keeps the IC card 1-5 inserted in the IC card reader/writer 1-6, since use by the qualified user is continuing, it is

likely that the user executes the print processing again at arbitrary timing. The printing system according to the present embodiment checks out the two conditions that, when the user issues a print job
5 again, the IC card 1-5 is inserted in the IC card reader/writer 1-6, and shifts to step S602 again.

Note that, as the judgment step on whether or not printing is continuously instructed (S604), a system of displaying a dialog on the display of the
10 user PC 1-1 and causing the user to make judgment is possible other than the above-mentioned embodiment.

Next, a processing flow on the printing device side will be hereinafter described with reference to Fig. 6.

15 When this "Print-Job (suspended state)" operation is issued on the user PC side and is received on the print server 1-2 side, the IPP server 1-11 generates a print job based upon the "Print-Job" operation and, at the same time, puts the print job
20 on hold to store and hold it in the storage device 1-3 (S611). Then, the IPP server 1-11 returns "Job-URI" of the print job to the IPP client 1-8 (S612). A state of transmission of the "Print-Job" operation and the "Job-URI" information is as shown by broken
25 lines in Fig. 6.

The IPP client 1-8 existing on the user PC side communicates the result (Job-URI) to the IC card

driver 1-7, and the IC card driver 1-7 writes obtained job URI information in the IC card 1-5 with the IC card reader/writer 1-6 (S603) to end the processing.

5 Next, the user inserts the IC card 1-5 having stored therein authentication information of the user and job URI information in the card reader/writer 1-6 of the printing device 1-2, causes the card reader/writer 1-6 to read the authentication
10 information in the IC card 1-5, inputs a pass phrase, and performs authentication processing by the authentication server 1-4 according to the authentication information and the pass phrase (S613) and, if the authentication fails, ends the processing
15 directly. At this point, printing is not executed.

 In the printing system according to the present embodiment, in order to make secrecy of print data firm in the printing device 1-2, in the case in which user authentication in the authentication server 1-4
20 has failed for a predetermined number of times or more, the printing device 1-2 does not accept user authentication thereafter and the print data held in the storage area in the suspended state is physically deleted automatically. Consequently, secrecy for
25 print information of the user is protected more firmly.

 On the other hand, if the user has succeeded in

the authentication by the authentication server 1-4
in step S613, next, the user judges whether or not
job URI information (Job-URI) concerning a job issued
by the user is held in the IC card 1-5 (S614). Here,
5 if the job URI information is not held, the user ends
the processing directly.

If the job URI information (Job-URI) concerning
the job issued by the user is held in the IC card 1-5,
the IC card driver 1-10 causes the IC card reader/
10 writer 1-9 to read the job URI information (S615).

Next, the IC card driver 1-10 designates this
job URI and automatically issues a "Release-Job"
operation of the IPP to the IPP server 1-11 (S616).

Then, the IPP server 1-11 accepts the "Release-
15 Job" operation, retrieves a designated job URI,
releases a job on the hold state, and issues "Print
Start" to the printer engine 1-12 from the IPP server
1-11. Then, print output is started by the printer
engine 1-12 (S617).

20 In this way, when job URI information of an IPP
job issued by a user is held in an IC card (smart
card) possessed by the user, the IC card (smart card)
is inserted in a printing device and, when user
authentication is successful, if a job URI is held in
25 the IC card, the IC card designates the job URI and
automatically issues "Release-Job".

In addition, a job is issued (in conformity

with a "job-hold-until" attribute) with the Internet printing Protocol (IPP), the job URI is held in a smart card in a device (user PC, etc.) which has issued the job and, when the smart card is inserted
5 in a printer and user authentication is successful, the IC card designates a job URI held in advance and automatically issues "Release-Job" to execute printing.

Consequently, a job URI list is not displayed
10 on an operation panel and, when the user succeeds in authentication, "Release-Job" of the IPP operation is immediately issued.

Note that, although the case in which "indefinite" is designated as a value of the "job-
15 hold-until" attribute is described above, the value may be other values such as "day-time," "evening," "night," and "weekend."

It is structured such that a job suspended and held in the printing device 1-2 is valid until a
20 deadline designated in the above-mentioned "job-hold-until" attribute value and, when the deadline has passed, the job is automatically deleted by the IPP server 1-11.

In addition, the deadline designated in the
25 "job-hold-until" attribute value can be set and changed by an administrator or the like on the user PC.

Now, after the printing is completed, the "Job-URI" information in the IC card 1-5 becomes unnecessary. The "Job-URI" information is completely deleted in order to prevent a person who is not
5 authorized to access print information from accessing the job designation information illegally and acquiring the print information illegally. Deletion of information is processed by the IC card driver 1-10. Usually, since a nonvolatile storage device is
10 incorporated as the storage area in the IC card 1-5, deletion of information is realized by overwriting of NULL data or overwriting of random data (S618).

Note that, with respect to Job-URI information which is set so as not to be deleted after printing,
15 the Job-URI information is not deleted but stored and held in the IC card as it is. The user can perform reprinting easily by performing such setting with respect to a print job which is required to be printed again after printing.

20 A print job held in the printing device 1-2 or the data storage device 1-3 and print data in the print job are also physically deleted completely at a stage where printing is completed in the same manner as the job designation information. The physical
25 deletion means overwriting all sectors in which data is held with NULL or random data as opposed logical deletion for deleting only sector table information

(so-called FAT information) holding data. (S619)

Note that, since print data corresponding to the Job-URI information which is set not to be deleted after printing is print data which is
5 required to be printed again, the print data is stored and held in the IC card as it is. In that case, it is safer if print data is encrypted using key information peculiar to the user stored in the IC card 1-5 and, then, stored and held in the printing
10 device 1-2 or the data storage device 1-3.

Note that each processing of deletion of "Job-URI" information in the IC card 1-5 (S618) and deletion of print job and print data held in the printing device (including data storage device)
15 (S619) may be held in the printing device intentionally with an object of reusing (reprinting) a print job because of a product structure. In order to realize a reprinting function of a print job, it is necessary to authenticate a user's right to
20 reprint print data (access control) strictly, and a mechanism for user authentication for that purpose should be provided.

For example, in a central management system of user information using a directory server, kerberos
25 authentication, NTLM authentication of Microsoft Windows (registered trademark) or the like is used as well, whereby more firm user authentication and

access control are possible.

Now, after printing ends for one print job and processing is completed, in the case in which another "Job-URI" information is held in the IC card 1-5, 5 print processing is continuously performed based upon the next "Job-URI" information. This judgment is performed by the IC card driver 1-10 and the IPP server component 1-11 (S620).

The IC card driver 1-10 judges whether or not a 10 plurality of pieces of "Job-URI" information are held in the IC card 1-5. Then, if the "Job-URI" information is held in the IC card 1-5, next, the IPP server component 1-11 checks whether or not a print job corresponding to the "Job-URI" information is 15 held in the printing device 1-2 or the data storage device 1-3. If the print job is held without inconsistency, the processing flow proceeds to S615 again, and print processing is performed.

In the case in which "Job-URI" information is 20 not held or the case in which "Job-URI" information in the IC card 1-5 and a suspended print job in the printing device 1-2 or the data storage area 1-3 are inconsistent, the processing on the printing device side is finished without executing printing.

25 Note that, in order to make confidentiality for print information more firm, in the case in which "Job-URI" information in the IC card 1-5 and a

suspended print job in the printing device 1-2 or the data storage area 1-3 are inconsistent, "Job-URI" information in the IC card 1-5 may be deleted.

It is needless to mention that, in the printing
5 system according to the present embodiment, the present invention is applicable whether a printer engine is a laser beam system, an electrophotographic system (e.g., LED system) other than the laser beam system, a liquid crystal shutter system, an ink-jet
10 system, a thermal transfer system, a sublimation system, or other print system.

A configuration of a data processing program, which can be read by the printing system to which the information processing apparatus and the printing
15 device according to the present embodiment are applicable, will be described with reference to a memory map shown in Fig. 5.

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating a memory map of a storage medium storing various data
20 processing programs which can be read by a printing system to which the information processing apparatus and the printing device according to the present invention are applicable.

Note that, although not specifically
25 illustrated, information for managing a program group stored in a storage medium, for example, version information, a creator, and the like may be stored,

and information depending upon an OS or the like on a program reading side, for example, an icon or the like for identifying to display a program may be stored.

5 Moreover, data subordinate to the various programs is also managed in the directory. In addition, in the case in which a program or data to be installed is compressed, a program or the like for decompressing the program or data may be stored.

10 The functions shown in Fig. 4 in the present embodiment may be performed by a host computer according to a program to be installed from the outside. Then, in that case, the present invention is also applicable to the case in which an
15 information group including a program is supplied to an output device by a storage medium such as a CD-ROM, a flash memory, or an FD, or from an external storage medium via a network.

 It is needless to mention that, as described
20 above, the objects of the present invention are attained if a storage medium having stored therein a program code for software for realizing the functions of the embodiment is supplied to a system or an apparatus, and a computer (or CPU or MPU) of the
25 system or the apparatus reads out to execute the program code stored in the storage medium.

 In this case, the program code itself read out

from the storage medium realizes a new function of the present invention, and the storage medium having stored therein the program code constitutes the present invention.

5 As the storage medium for supplying the program code, for example, a floppy disk, a hard disk, an optical disk, a magnetooptical disk, a CD-ROM, a CD-R, a DVD-ROM, a magnetic tape, a nonvolatile memory card, a ROM, an EEPROM, a silicon disk, or the like can be
10 used.

 In addition, it is needless to mention that the present invention includes not only the case in which the functions of the embodiment are realized by the computer executing the read out program code but
15 also the case in which an operating system (OS) or the like running on the computer performs a part or all of actual processing based upon an instruction of the program code and the functions of the embodiment are realized by the processing.

20 Moreover, it is needless to mention that the present invention includes the case in which the program code read out from the storage medium is written in a memory provided in a function extending board inserted in the computer or a function
25 extending unit connected to the computer and, then, based upon an instruction of the program code, a CPU or the like provided in the function extending board

or the function extending unit performs a part or all of actual processing, and the functions of the embodiment are realized by the processing.

In addition, the present invention may be
5 applied to a system constituted by a plurality of devices or may be applied to an apparatus consisting of one device. Further, it is needless to mention that the present invention can be applied to the case in which the present invention is attained by
10 supplying a program to a system or an apparatus. In this case, a storage medium having stored therein a program represented by software for attaining the present invention is read out to the system or the apparatus, whereby it becomes possible for the system
15 or the apparatus to enjoy the effects of the present invention. Moreover, a program represented by software for attaining the present invention is downloaded and read out from a database on a network by a communication program, whereby it becomes
20 possible for the system or the apparatus to enjoy the effects of the present invention.

As described above, according to the present embodiment, when an information processing apparatus issues a print job to a printing device in a
25 suspended state, in the case in which a print job to be issued from the information processing apparatus is in the suspended state, the printing device side

suspends and holds print processing until suspension of job processing is released, and returns job designation information peculiar to the print job to the information processing apparatus. The

5 information processing apparatus side writes peculiar job designation information of the print job returned from the printing device in a detachable storage medium. Next, in the case in which peculiar job designation information of the suspended print job is

10 stored in the detachable storage medium, the printing device side reads out the job designation information, issues an instruction for releasing suspension of job processing and, upon the release of suspension of job processing, executes print processing of the print

15 job held in the suspended state, whereby troublesome user operations at the time of remote printing can be reduced and usability can be improved while securing confidentiality of a print. In addition, since authentication processing is executed using an

20 authentication server, an effect is realized in that other users are prevented from using their IC cards to willfully execute others' print jobs.

Although the present invention has been described based upon the preferred embodiment, the

25 present invention is not limited to this, and various modifications are possible within a scope indicated in claims.